



**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL
OF THE CITY OF CONRAD, COUNTY OF PONDERA, STATE OF MONTANA
HELD AT CONRAD CITY HALL ON OCTOBER 17, 2023**

The City Council of the City of Conrad, County of Pondera, State of Montana, met in regular session at the Conrad City Hall on October 17, 2023 at 6:00 p.m.

Present: Mayor Jamie Miller, Alderman David Cates, Alderman Scott Mycke, Alderman Amber Schoenrock, and Finance Office Joani Mink

Absent: Alderman Hunsucker with permission

Guests present: 3

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Miller at 6:00 p.m.

Read & Approve Minutes of October 3, 2023, Regular Meeting

- Motion by Alderman Schoenrock, second by Alderman Cates to Approve the Minutes with minor changes dated October 3, 2023.
 - Motion Carried Unanimously

Action on Claims

Claims #27533, #27562, and #27566 through #27597 (refer to the claims register/claims approval list)

- Motion by Alderman Cates, second by Alderman Schoenrock, to approve the claims, as presented.
 - Motion Carried Unanimously

City of Conrad Department Reports

Conrad Public Library, Library Director

The Library Director reported the following information: 1,042 library visits, 1, 801 items circulated, 12 programs held, 156 program attendees, 210 computer users, and 20,331 separate Wi-Fi sessions. The library is currently fully staffed with the addition of two new part time employees, and back to full operating hours: Monday, Wednesday, Friday: 9:00 am – 5:00 pm; Tuesday and Thursday: 9:00 am-7:00 pm. Teens met to discuss the Democracy Project and will meet again Monday, November 6th at 6:30 pm at the library. Teens are encouraged to attend and join in this first phase. A new intercom/doorbell has been installed at the north door of the building. Patrons are welcome to utilize the parking spaced behind the library and ring the doorbell for entrance. Lastly, the library building was inspected by Nelson Architects who provided a preliminary architectural report (PAR). The preliminary PAR noted that the building is structurally sound and some upgrades are needed to bring the building to code (mechanical, electrical, architectural). Expected renovation costs is upwards of \$1 million dollars; the report was organized to comply with the CDBG grant requirements. This grant, as well as others, could help provide some of the funding necessary for the renovations of the library's historical building.

Correspondence:

A letter dated October 12, 2023 regarding the Blue Sky Villa lease agreement with Horizon Lodge Apartments, Inc. was reviewed. The letter stated that the board decided unanimously to not enter into a new lease with the City of Conrad and cited two reasons: the first reason being that paying the City the reserve funds in entirety leaves no

funds for Horizon lodge at beginning of the new lease term and, secondly, the proposed 75% increase in rent in one year over the previous years' rent which was not felt to be reasonable. Horizon Lodge Apartments, Inc. will continue to perform the existing lease through its termination date and then work with the City in the transition of taking back the facility. The Council and Mayor discussed different options such as the City hiring a property manager for Blue Sky Villa or determining if the lease can continue to be negotiated. The Mayor recommended a committee meeting in order to discuss this issue further.

6:34 P.M. OPEN PUBLIC HEARING

- Motion by Alderman Schoenrock, second by Alderman Cates, to close the normal session and open the public hearing.
 - Motion Carried Unanimously

OPEN PUBLIC HEARING (6:34 P.M.):

The first reading of Ordinance #427 Repeal of Conrad City Code Title 2, Chapter 5 "Parks and Recreation Board" was conducted. The Mayor made several solicitations for public comment and no comments were received during this hearing.

6:55 P.M. RE-OPEN REGULAR MEETING

- Motion by Alderman Cates, second by Alderman Schoenrock, to close the public hearing session and open the public hearing.
 - Motion Carried Unanimously

Discussion/Action: First Reading of Ordinance #427 - Repeal of Conrad City Code Title 2, Chapter 5 "Parks and Recreation Board"

- Motion by Alderman Cates, second by Alderman Schoenrock, to approve the first reading of Ordinance #427 Repeal of Conrad City Code Title 2, Chapter 5 "Parks and Recreation Board"
 - Motion Carried Unanimously

Public Comments:

A question was asked about where the City is at with installation of the lights at the ball park. Alderman Schoenrock replied that the installation is being managed by the Park and Rec, Inc. They City has not had a recent update and it was last understood there was possibly an issue with coordinating the installation equipment needed which is being volunteered and provided by North West Energy.

Discussion/Action: Mayor's Request for a Dog Park Committee

Mayor Miller discussed a request from citizens of Conrad for a dog park. The Mayor is looking into developing the dog park on undeveloped city property located on east-side of Conrad. Discussion ensued concerning the insurance coverage for a dog park and if this would pose any coverage concerns. The Mayor noted many other communities in the region are installing dog parks but the City would definitely verify coverage with MMIA.

- Motion by Alderman Schoenrock, second by Alderman Mycke, moved to approve Mayor's request to form a Dog Park Committee.
 - Motion Carried Unanimously

Discussion/Action: Mayoral Proclamation – Recycling Month

- Motion by Alderman Schoenrock, second by Alderman Cates, to approve the Mayoral Proclamation City of Conrad for the month of November.
 - Motion Carried Unanimously

Discussion/Action: Finance Officer addition to Bank Accounts (Independence Bank and Stockman Bank Accounts)

- Motion by Alderman Schoenrock, second by Alderman Mycke, to approve the addition of Joani Mink, Finance Officer, to all bank accounts, and all associated accounts, at Independence Bank and Stockman Bank.
 - Motion Carried Unanimously

Discussion/Action: Resolution 23-1290 1st Liberty Resolution of Authority

- Motion by Alderman Schoenrock, second by Alderman Cates, to approve 1st Liberty Federal Credit Union's Resolution #23-1290 removing Hilary Ritter as Finance Officer and adding Joani Mink as Finance Officer and giving authority to Joani Mink to all related bank accounts.
 - Motion Carried Unanimously

Discussion/Action: Resolution #23-1291- Authorizing Executive Control of Wells Fargo Accounts

The Mayor noted this account is now a back-up account and was originally needed for City credit cards. Discussion ensued for closing this account now that the credit cards are not needed; closing this account will be evaluated in the future.

- Motion by Alderman Schoenrock, second by Alderman Cates, to approve Resolution #23-1291 Resolution of the City Council of the City of Conrad Authorizing Key Executive with Control of Wells Fargo Accounts with officers Jamie Miller, Mayor, Joani Mink, Finance officer, and Kim Cooney, Billing Clerk and removing Hilary Ritter.
 - Motion Carried Unanimously

Executive Session: None

Other Business: MMIA/League Training Opportunity

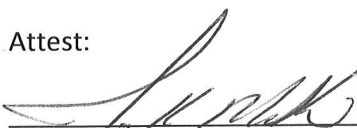
Finance Officer Mink and the Mayor reported on their attendance to the League Conference the prior week in Helena. Both noted the education and networking were invaluable. Ms. Mink reported the session attended the first day on Human Relation employee laws, both Federal and State level issues, effecting our office practices may prove beneficial in the future. She reported a course on AI intelligence and how it can be used in municipal offices to expediate work projects was also very insightful. Mayor Miller noted these conferences are also open to council members and encouraged council members to attend in the future. The Mayor also reported that the League and MMIA will train on-site for free and offered to bring training to Conrad soon, which would be especially beneficial for our new council member and finance officer. The Mayor highlighted other issues learned at the conference, such as that there are many other towns who have new (or no) finance clerks which makes our town not unique in what we have faced. The Mayor reported hearing from other attendees at the conference that other small towns of similar size are considering hiring a city manager to help lessen the burden towns face in this situation especially. The Mayor said she will be highly advocating for a similar change in our town; a city manager (or Administrative Assistant) should be considered in the near future.

Items to Appear on Next or Future Agendas: Boards and Commission Appointments, potential further discussion on hiring a City Manager (Admin Assistant), City office closure the Friday after Thanksgiving, further discussion and decision on the request for water shares for Power.

Meeting Adjourned:

- There being no further business to come before the council, motion by Alderman Schoenrock, second by Alderman Cates, to adjourn the meeting at 7:15 p.m.
 - Motion Carried Unanimously

Attest:


Finance Officer




Mayor